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GLOBAL MECHANISM

(b) REVIEW, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPH 2(D) OF THE CONVENTION, OF THE REPORT ON POLICIES, OPERATIONAL MODALITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM, AND THE PROVISION OF GUIDANCE TO IT

Addendum

Report on the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism

Note by the secretariat

1. At its third session, the Conference of the Parties, by its decision 9/COP.3 on the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism (GM), inter alia:

(a) Decided to give further consideration to the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism at its fourth session and requested the Managing Director to prepare a document on the operational strategy based on comments, suggestions and proposals made during the third session, as well as on written submissions by the Parties received no later than 31 March 2000, and to submit that document for consideration and a compendium of submissions;

(b) Recommended that the Global Mechanism develop, as part of the operational strategy for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session, an information and communication strategy, which will aim to facilitate contact with Parties and other actors, increase awareness of the Convention, and promote participation in its implementation.

2. Annexed hereto is the report on the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism to the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties. A compendium of submissions from Parties and Observers is contained in ICCD/COP(4)/4/Add.1 (B).

3. The report of the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties is contained in ICCD/COP(4)/4, while ICCD/COP(4)/4/Add.2 contains the report of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

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[1] ICCD/COP(4)/1.

The Report of The Managing Director of The Global Mechanism on the Operational Strategy: A Framework for Action[2]

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[2] The report is reproduced without formal editing by the Convent secretariat.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties at its third session held in Recife, Brazil, in November 1999, considered the Operational Strategy (OS) of the Global Mechanism (GM). By decision 9/COP.3, the COP requested that the Managing Director prepare a document on the Operational Strategy, based on comments, suggestions and proposals made during the third session and on written comments from the Parties received prior to 31 March 2000, and to submit the document for the consideration of the COP, with a compendium of the comments received.

2. In response to the above-mentioned request, the present document is submitted to the COP for consideration at its fourth session. It updates the progress made in further developing the Operational Strategy, thus providing the GM with a clear focus and direction with which to serve the Parties and the stakeholders. A compendium of comments received from the Parties is contained in ICCD/COP(4)/4/Add.1 (B).

3. Prior to its formal submission, this document was circulated to all the members of the Facilitation Committee and incorporates clarifications on the scope and functions of the GM provided by them. In order to facilitate consideration by the COP of the progress made in further elaboration of the Operational Strategy of the GM, this report refers to the key chapters contained in ICCD/COP(3)/CRP.3.

4. By decision 9/COP.3, para. 23, the Parties decided that the second review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism would take place at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2003. On the basis of the above-mentioned decision, the COP 4 may wish to request the GM to prepare a revised version of its Operational Strategy, taking into account the experience gained within the evolving environment in which the Convention is being implemented, during the period leading up to the sixth session of the COP.

I. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5. This report summarizes the progress made by the GM in further developing its Operational Strategy. It charts the course for GM operations based on its comparative advantages.

6. A fundamental assumption underlying the Operational Strategy is that the realization of its goals and objectives will depend on the actions of the Parties as well as those of the GM. The GM will continue to seek effective partnerships and build on existing processes and ongoing initiatives that address specific issues of direct relevance to its mandate and will aim at achieving tangible results, particularly at the local level.

7. In order to be able to fulfil its functions as described above, the GM must have resources of its own. For example, the process of creating partnerships and supporting the establishment of agreements between affected developing country Parties to the Convention and the developed country Parties involves the organization of seminars and workshops, and the preparation of supporting documentation and consultancy services related to all these tasks. Catalytic resources are invested by the GM in all these activities. The GM also needs resources to be able to support, on a co-financing basis, the initiation of action programme formulation and implementation. Moreover, the development of the information system of the GM requires investments to ensure that it becomes a participatory and decentralized knowledge management system in support of the process of matching supply with demand, providing valuable financial information for the Convention implementation. The development and implementation of a vigorous communications strategy and outreach programme also requires substantial resources and collaboration from the stakeholders.

II. THE CONTEXT: GLOBAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES[3]

8. The environment within which the Global Mechanism is operating has been under continuous change since the Convention was ratified. This chapter highlights some distinct features and challenges that have been taken into consideration by the GM, including the global scenario and specific external factors that will have a bearing on the its operations in the medium- and long-term, as summarized below:

(a) *Increased population and urbanization*: The latest United Nations projections estimate that the world population will reach 7.2 billion in 2015. Ninety per cent of this increase will occur in the developing countries. By 2015, Africa's population will be 55 per cent above its 1995 level, while that of the other developing regions will be close to 33 per cent above the 1995 level. Urbanization is rapidly increasing in developing countries, and by 2010 more people will be living in urban areas, than in rural areas.

(b) *Persistence of poverty*: Recent world estimates indicate that 1.3 billion people were living on less than $ 1 per day in 1998, and 2.8 billion were living on $ 2 per day. These estimates are practically the same as those for 1987. Thus, despite the changes over the past decades, the number of the poor declined substantially in the mid-1990s, to rise again in the late 1990s. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the largest share of people living below the $ 1/day threshold (46.3 per cent), while South Asia is home to (85 per cent) of those living on less than the $ 2/day. In Latin America and the Caribbean, poverty rates remained fairly constant throughout the 1990s (16 per cent). Moreover, poverty remains a rural phenomenon, accounting for about 80 per cent of the total population in poverty. Significant shares of the rural poor live in less-favoured areas; indeed recent estimates show that about half of the total rural poor population live in the dry lands affected by desertification. Economic growth in the coming years is expected to be more sustained in the developing world as a whole than in developed countries, although there will be considerable disparities between countries. Change in the global distribution of wealth among developed and developing regions, however, is likely to be slow. At present 78 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP) is accounted for by high-income countries, which have 15 per cent of the world's population, while only 2.5 per cent come from low-income countries, which are home to 35 per cent of the world's population. Thus, the prospects for reducing rural poverty - in particular in the dry lands - over the coming decade, is conditioned by major changes in the global economy to contain slow growth and rising inequalities.

(c) *Water scarcity*: Growing water scarcity in a context of demographic growth will have a profoundly adverse impact on food production and living standards, first and foremost in climatic areas covered by the Convention. Falling water tables, aquifer depletion due to the advent of powerful pumps and the consequences of irrigated farming such as water logging, salting and silting are threatening the sustainability of food harvesting. Industry and urbanization demands for water use are further intensifying the competition between cities and countryside.

(d) *Changing Nature and Level of ODA*: The last decade has witnessed a profound change in the structure and level of agricultural ODA. Bilateral aid agencies have increasingly been promoting partnerships between their institutions and those in developing countries as a means of increasing the efficiency of assistance, while the level of available aid resources is shrinking, in real terms. Moreover, the priorities of bilateral aid agencies

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[3] This Chapter refers to the chapter of the Operational Strategy bearing the same title.

have also changed both geographically and sectorally. In practice, this means that any initiative to implement the Convention is confronted by increasing competition for a shrinking development assistance envelope. Furthermore, the UNCCD does not rely on a fully-fledged financial instrument specifically created to finance its implementation. Under these circumstances, the UNCCD implementation represents a challenge as well as an opportunity for both developing and developed countries in terms of defining a viable framework of shared but differentiated responsibilities, where the necessary domestic efforts of developing countries will be matched by clear financial commitments of developed countries. While calling on affected Parties to exercise more effective use of existing financial resources and institutional capacities, the UNCCD also calls on developed countries to bring new financial resources for the implementation of the Convention.

(e) *Advances in Science and Technology:* Advances in the fields of biotechnology, communications and information sciences are rapidly defining a new techno-economic paradigm in developed countries, which is having a profound impact on social organization and production patterns. New boundaries and opportunities are being generated in every field of human activity. Agriculturally based economic and social processes are among those most affected by these new developments. By their nature, these new tools could be deployed to generate greater diversity and better quality of crops adaptable to the marginal conditions prevailing in subsistence agriculture, as well as to improve food production and processing systems in commercial agriculture. The significance of these trends will depend on the institutional and economic environment within which the technologies are developed and applied. So far, however, biotechnology and communication technologies seem to have a relatively modest impact in most developing countries, particularly on smallholders' cultivating marginal lands. Moreover, their increasingly private nature and the smallholders low investment capacity appear to limit the interest of biotechnology and communication industries in harnessing the new tools to the smallholders' concerns, thereby restricting the latter's access to new products.

9. The GM is therefore sensitive to the economic, social and conceptual frameworks within which the stakeholders and the Parties to the Convention make decisions. The GM's ability to seek new synergies through which to implement the Convention depends on its Operational Strategy being relevant and realistic in the face of such emerging trends. Such a strategy will foster partnerships between affected and developed country Parties, between rich and poor countries, between national and international agencies, between the formal and informal sectors, between the public and private sectors, with each contributing its comparative advantages. Such partnerships are, in turn, required in the effort to bring the implementation of the Convention to new horizons that can address and incorporate the emerging new global challenges to the benefit of the poorest segment of the population, which is most affected by land degradation.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONAL STRATEGY[4]

10. The guiding principles refer to the process through which the results of the international agreements embodied in the UNCCD process to date are transferred into decisive action at national, subregional and regional levels.

11. The GM approach in fulfilling its institutional mandate in conformity with the directives of the COP and with the support of the Facilitation Committee is

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[4] This chapter refers to the chapter entitled "The Approach" in the Operational Strategy, in which a number of Guiding Principles are specified.

to apply the following guiding principles, which are embodied in the Convention and COP decisions:

(a) Inclusiveness: The GM is an all-inclusive, non-monopolistic financing mechanism geared towards promoting multi-source, and multi-channel mobilization of resources. Although acting on request, the GM seeks to ensure that the interests and concerns of all potential actors are accounted for. This requires extensive effort on the part of the GM to reach out to the various constituencies at both local and global levels, including civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and community organizations;

(b) Selectivity: The GM's efforts are directed at supporting initiatives, to which it can add high value, being primarily pro-active and responsive to the needs of affected country Parties. The GM has therefore been careful in selecting its entry points, giving priority to those where the chances of a successful impact are more realistic and where it can build on relevant interventions by its development partners, without compromising its universality. In this context the Global Mechanism recognizes the need to focus primarily on initiatives launched by the Parties within the UNCCD implementation process;

(c) Synergism and partnership: The GM identifies itself as one of several actors with shared responsibility for the implementation of the Convention. The comparative advantage of the GM comes from the mandate entrusted to it by the Convention. Given the principle that it should be a lean and efficient operation, it has to draw on other institutions, especially those of its Facilitation Committee (FC), including its housing institution (International Fund for Agricultural Development), and more broadly, the United Nations system-wide capacities and facilities, to be able to discharge its functions. Its successful impact is therefore conditioned by its capacity to build synergies and partnerships to complement the efforts of other institutions and actors. By leveraging their inputs, the GM aims to enhance the total impact of their dedicated efforts to implement the Convention;

(d) Multiplier effect: On the basis of the above principles, the GM invests its own resources to foster partnerships and synergies and thereby leverages the resources of its partners for the implementation of the Convention. Such catalytic investments mobilize greater resource flows, leading to a considerable multiplier effect on GM investments;

(e) Primacy of NAPs and Local Area Development Programmes (LADPs): The GM views NAPs and their related LADPs as being of strategic importance for the successful development and implementation of the Convention. At the same time, they are also of strategic importance for the successful development and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes (SRAPs and RAPs). Without an effective and functional base at local and national levels, there is limited scope for operating successfully at subregional and regional levels. In turn, an effective and functional base at local and national levels will gradually benefit from cooperative measures taken at subregional and regional levels;

(f) Subsidiarity: The GM pursues the principle of subsidiarity, by which the relationships between NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs are planned and managed at the lowest possible level. Thus, natural resource degradation issues, restricted to the domain of an individual country, must be addressed within the context of the NAP, while issues that transcend national boundaries (such as shared water resources, migratory pests, desertification monitoring, and sharing of experiences on policy implementation across borders) are to be addressed through SRAPs and RAPs. The GM will intervene in a targeted manner to support initiatives at the appropriate level;

(g) Continuous learning: The GM continues to evolve through a process of innovation and evaluation of new approaches and mechanisms for effective resource mobilization. Its relevance and the value it adds to the Convention process depends on its ability to remain at the cutting edge of the resource mobilization processes, and its capacity to disseminate and share analytical information and lessons learned, on successes and failures, with the stakeholders and the Parties to the Convention.

IV. THE FUNCTIONS[1]

12. The framework that defines the Operational Strategy revolves around three axes and the ultimate and fundamental interaction between them. The first is directed at internalizing UNCCD objectives into the policies and strategies of the affected country Parties (the demand side). The second is directed at mainstreaming the UNCCD into the relevant interventions of the development partners (the supply side). The third is directed at the mobilization of the external environment with the purpose of effectively involving it in the implementation of the UNCCD (the outreach side). The GM's mandate and main thrust is to combine the effects of actions taken along the three axes with the overall goal of boosting the total resources deployed in achieving the Convention's objectives.

A. The demand side

1. Contribution to the mainstreaming of UNCCD objectives within national strategies for poverty reduction

13. Formulation of desertification control strategies requires an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach, which places such strategies centrally within strategic frameworks for poverty reduction. Competition for natural resources, in the face of increasing privatization and globalization, is placing greater demands on the regulatory functions of the State. Consequently, national policies and regulatory frameworks must increasingly respond to domestic demand on resources and be consistent with international frameworks.

14. Land degradation, water scarcity, pollution and salinization, destruction of forests, greenhouse gas emissions, and loss of genetic resources and biodiversity threaten the well-being of present and future generations. Fragile ecosystems, in particular, are in the frontline of desertification. Formulation of national action programmes under the UNCCD must take account of all these issues to ensure the utmost relevance of such programmes within the broader national development policy framework and hence bring the issue of desertification and land degradation to the forefront in the development debate and process.

15. The GM will thus seek cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies and Multilateral Financing Institutions (MFIs), with specialized institutions and mechanisms, and with the EC member institutions, to support the mainstreaming of UNCCD objectives into national development policies and strategies. It will also help to identify opportunities for capacity-building and forge collaborative arrangements between interested Parties to build the institutional and human resource capacity needed to meet these challenges, taking into account ongoing initiatives.

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[1] The Operational Strategy submitted by the GM to COP 3 outlined the functions, priorities, and entry points for GM interventions. This chapter elaborates further on such functions, based on the GM's own experiences to date and its extensive consultations with the Parties and various stakeholders.

16. Within the process of NAP formulation and implementation in the developing country Parties, the responsibility for coordination rests with the national coordinating bodies, which are often located in the ministries of the environment. Yet, in order to address desertification issues adequately, sectoral ministries, such as those responsible for agriculture, livestock, water and rural development, must be involved. Moreover, the financing of UNCCD implementation is closely linked to the more efficient and effective use of existing financial resources, which necessitates the involvement of the ministries of finance and planning in the process, at an early stage. This, in turn, contributes to placing desertification issues high on the national development agenda. The GM's task is to facilitate this process and contribute to rendering operational the interface between sectoral and national strategies.

17. Likewise, the GM facilitates dialogue between Governments and grass-roots communities within the context of addressing land degradation issues. The GM's added value in facilitating this process lies in its ability to support these processes financially, to forge partnerships and to undertake preparatory work at various levels. The degree of success of the GM's input will be measured in terms of the multiplier effect on the resources it invested in this process.

B. The supply side

1. Mainstreaming UNCCD objectives in development partners' strategies

18. The GM, in close cooperation with the members of the Facilitation Committee, is seeking to mainstream UNCCD objectives within these institutions. Through its hosting institution, IFAD, it has already started to forge close operational links with the regional operational divisions of IFAD through participation in selective programme design missions and interaction with the Desk Teams to facilitate the synergies between investment plans and opportunities for desertification control in specific countries. A similar effort has been initiated with the World Bank through its country assistance strategy (CAS), and opportunities are being pursued with the regional banks. The European Union (EU) through the provisions of the Lomé Convention is a major donor to poverty reduction in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Through its interaction with the Commission's secretariat, the GM seeks to explore complementarities and synergies that can mainstream the Convention's objectives within EU-funded development activities/operations.

2. Utilization of the GM's own resources to support the process of donor financing

19. The GM's own resources in support of Action Programme formulation and implementation are allocated upon the advice of a technical advisory committee. The objectives of GM grants are multiple and include undertaking priorities and catalytic actions to promote financial resource mobilization; identifying and promoting actions to optimize the use of existing resources; developing and promoting arrangements to channel resources to affected country Parties; facilitating the establishment of joint funding arrangements to support national, subregional and regional action programme processes; "kick-starting" action programme implementation by providing initial co-financing.

3. Exploring innovative approaches to mobilize new and additional resources

20. One of the main functions of the GM is to be engaged in strategic initiatives that can provide new and additional resources to finance the Convention. In this context, article 20 of the Convention draws attention to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), article 4 and 20 draw attention to the debt burden of affected developing countries, while article 8 refers to interaction with other Conventions. The GM has been exploring opportunities to direct a greater allocation of GEF resources into implementing the Convention,

and in so doing, has established a strong relationship with the GEF secretariat and its implementing agencies. Together with the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), the GM will assist affected countries to prepare a pipeline of GEF-eligible land degradation control projects in Asia. In addition to several initiatives described above, the GM is seeking to operationalize the interface between SRAPs/RAPs and the GEF focal areas. The newly adopted Operation Programme 12 of the GEF on Integrated Ecosystem Management is of particular interest in this context. Its adoption does, in itself, reflect an interest on the part of GEF to support activities related to desertification and land degradation.

(a) *Carbon sequestration* (CS) offers new opportunities for funding the Convention since soil organic matter and the productivity of the soil itself, particularly in drylands, is closely related to soil carbon content. Rehabilitation of degraded agricultural land and rangelands into productive lands through carbon sequestration is therefore of interest to the GM. The underlying financial rationale is that the cost of reducing CO^2 emissions in developed countries is often higher than that of absorbing CO^2 through reforestation and land improvement initiatives in developing countries. Moreover, current research has demonstrated the potentially high rates of CO^2 sequestration in rangelands and other drylands. The new approach for integrated ecosystem management (IEM) in dryland areas therefore offers the potential for tapping new and additional resources in support of the Convention. Carbon trading is already taking place and the GM aims at becoming a partner in this process thereby securing new and additional funding for Convention implementation. The GM works in close cooperation with IFAD and FAO as well as with the World Bank on this issue. The USAID and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and through them a number of United States based universities and other research institutions are also involved in this work.

(b) *Debt relief* initiatives are increasingly shaping the relationships between developing and developed countries in respect to development assistance. The possibility of using the instruments of the Paris Club and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) of the World Bank, in order to direct part of the debt relief resources to support the Convention, is being explored. Given that it is now accepted that countries benefiting from debt relief initiatives must link this to strategies for poverty reduction, the UNCCD, with its national action strategies, has a potentially central role in negotiations on debt relief. To this effect, the GM with the support of IFAD and the World Bank is exploring opportunities for placing the Convention at the centre of national poverty reduction strategies, as they evolve. Moreover, the GM, in collaboration with IFAD, FAO and WTP is exploring approaches to allocating part of the relieved bilateral debt to UNCCD implementation, through the pilot model developed in collaboration with the Government of Italy.

(c) *Fostering relationships with the international environmental conventions* is a main task assigned to the secretariat and the GM as the two subsidiary bodies of the Convention, on which they will cooperate closely. In particular, article 8 of the Convention calls on them to develop approaches and opportunities for cooperation with relevant international agreements, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In addition, linkages are also being developed with the Convention on International Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). In this context, the GM will seek opportunities for synergies leading to possible mobilization of resources specifically available for reaching the objectives of these international agreements. The GM is therefore interested in intensifying its dialogue with the mechanisms associated with these Conventions.

C. Matching demand with supply

21. Mainstreaming the objectives of the Convention in the national strategies of affected country Parties and in the development strategies of MFIs, bilateral development cooperation agencies, other international development institutions, including NGOs, and the private sector is a prerequisite for successful resource mobilization and hence, the implementation of the Convention. The GM's strength thus lies in its capacity to forge and strengthen such partnerships, so as to increase resource flows for the implementation of the Convention.

1. Support for actions leading to cooperation and coordination of UNCCD implementation

22. The functions of the GM as set out in article 21 of the Convention, and in decision 24/COP.1 and its annex, define the scope of GM operations. High priority is given to its catalytic and brokering role in resource mobilization. The importance of this function is primarily related to the need to ensure a flow of significant domestic and external resources to implement the Convention. The financial support provided by the GM with its own resources aims to strengthen and accelerate the ongoing processes thus capitalizing on established financial mechanisms with the purpose of creating synergies, and not duplicating, existing efforts.

23. While the GM does not assume direct responsibility for developing and implementing NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, it supports an interactive and participatory approach to the establishment of operational linkages between action programmes and other relevant initiatives supported by domestic resources and/or bilateral and multilateral agencies. It also supports the building of partnerships and strategic alliances between institutions whose mandates are relevant to action programmes at national, subregional and regional levels.

24. The subsequent step in the process is to facilitate the matching of resource needs with available domestic and external resources. These may come from different sources (domestic, bilateral, multilateral, private sector, international foundations and NGOs), and take different forms (parallel, co-financing, grants and loans), contributed either directly to the country or through the mechanisms of financial institutions. The flexibility of this approach is key to the effectiveness of the resource mobilization process.

2. Creating partnerships and alliances to increase financial flows

25. *Round tables*: The GM actively participates in the required coalition of institutions needed to support and finance the organization of consultative meetings between countries and donors on specific Action Programmes at national, subregional and regional levels. Such consultative meetings form a cornerstone of GM support to match resource availability with financial and technical demand for implementation of action programmes. Such meetings are organized at ministerial level and at national, subregional and regional levels, involving the environment, agriculture, other technical ministries as well as ministers of finance and with the participation of multilateral and bilateral funding agencies. Such meetings will focus on increasing the flow of domestic and external investments in the drylands of the regions of affected country Parties.

26. *Regional and subregional workshops*: In preparation for the process described above the GM, as requested by the Conference of the Parties at its third session, is organizing, in coordination with the secretariat, and with the support and participation of bilateral as well as multilateral donor organizations, regional and subregional workshops involving representatives of countries and subregional and regional organizations, on procedures and approaches to access existing financial mechanisms for the benefit of Convention implementation.

3. Knowledge management system for the collection and dissemination of information

27. The development of a knowledge management system in support of matching supply with demand for financing and as a source of information on available resources and financial flows is one of the main functions of the GM.

28. A system of this type, the Financial Information Engine on Land Degradation (FIELD), will underpin the overall resource mobilization process and facilitate partnership building by providing a single point of access to relevant financial information that will be used in support of decision-making.

29. The design of the FIELD system is the result of extensive consultations with the Parties to the UNCCD and the stakeholders. Its technical development is being carried out through a collaborative effort between the GM, IFAD and FAO-World Agriculture Information Centre (WAICENT). The information for the FIELD system is being collected from existing databases in collaboration with MFIs, United Nations agencies, EU, OECD/DAC, bilateral development cooperation agencies, governments of affected developing country Parties, NGOs, academic institutions, foundations, networks, and other organizations and bodies dealing with land degradation issues. In this context, the GM is establishing collaboration with relevant national, subregional and regional information systems on desertification (such as DESELAC in Latin America).

30. FIELD will initially consist of a set of interrelated inventories on UNCCD financing, including (a) available financial resources; (b) a directory of people and institutions; (c) financial needs; (d) project information; and (e) best practices. This system is intended to facilitate access to relevant information on the activities of donor institutions as well as on domestic resource allocations and requirements. In particular, it will provide pointers to original documents or data, as well as a structured summary of the substantive information contained therein.

31. This information will be mainly disseminated via the Internet in the form of an on-line information service accessible from the GM homepage and from other partners' Web sites. In addition, since the level of access to new information technologies remains diverse from country to country, the GM will use other communication tools, such as CD-ROMs and written reports, so that countries with a relatively poor infrastructure can receive information as effectively as possible.

32. FIELD will therefore support decision-making by providing transparency on the status of financing implementation of the Convention, thereby facilitating the identification of resource gaps and allowing for better coordination of activities. It will also allow financial institutions to target resources to support innovative approaches to combating desertification, applying interdisciplinary technical solutions and institutional arrangements aimed at sustainable results.

33. In the next stage of its development, FIELD will collect information on the flow of resources from the private sector, development foundations and NGOs. Benchmarks and performance indicators for the flow of resources will also be developed. These indicators will also be applied to the operations of the GM, to facilitate its management and reporting requirements and provide a baseline against which the performance of the GM can be measured. The efforts of the GM will be directed at constantly improving quality, timeliness, relevance and coverage of the FIELD system.

D. The outreach side

1. Communication and information as an integral part of operations

34. The GM must increase the awareness and understanding of the Convention as part of its resource mobilization efforts. To do so it will develop a flexible approach, responding to both the increasing demand for awareness-raising of the Convention process in general and, more specifically, of the mandate, strategy and activities of the GM. Regarding the information and awareness-raising of the Convention, the GM will rely on the mandate and experience of the UNCCD secretariat. In this regard, and following a recommendation of the Conference of the Parties, the GM and the secretariat will operate on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the two institutions, which specifies their respective responsibilities. The GM must therefore build partnerships and alliances that can influence the decision-making processes in donor countries and institutions and in the policy-making agencies of the affected country Parties, in favour of the Convention. The GM must also reach out to the scientific community to seek opportunities and partnerships to enhance the focus of natural resource management research on the issues facing the affected country Parties in implementing the Convention (see below). The GM must also reach out to the international NGO community. Furthermore, the GM needs to expand cooperation with private sector organizations at international, regional and local levels, as represented *inter alia* by chambers of commerce. The multinational private sector organizations that are seeking opportunities within the framework of trade to invest in developing countries could be encouraged to support the Convention in those countries where they are seeking to establish a presence, or contribute through donations under tax-reduction systems. To accelerate this process, the GM will seek different partnerships including possible cooperation with the World Bank/International Financing Corporation (IFC), IFAD and FAO/Investment.

35. With this rationale, and as requested by the Conference of the Parties, the GM is developing its communications and information strategy as a basis for developing and performing these tasks in an efficient manner. The ability of the GM to secure the necessary support to fulfil its mandate depends on the quality and effectiveness of its communications strategy. It must also develop an understanding of, and support for, its objectives among key audiences, of the services it offers both to affected country Parties and developed country Parties. Moreover, this will enhance the transparency and accountability of the operations of the GM. To this end, the GM will work closely with the UNCCD secretariat and concentrate its marketing and awareness-raising activities on issues related to financing the Convention.

36. The GM will present a separate document on its communications strategy. That document will provide the outline according to which a full communications strategy will be developed and a set of communication tools will be designed and produced. During this process the GM will seek active involvement of all its stakeholders, and for this purpose it will solicit input and collaboration at the meetings in which the GM will participate as well as through other means.

2. Building partnerships with research and technology institutes

37. Research is an important tool to support the Convention. Recent trends in priority setting for agricultural research has placed increased emphasis on natural resource management (NRM) research within the Global Strategic Agenda. Moreover, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and its network of International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) have established strong priorities for addressing NRM issues in collaboration with the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs). The GM is seeking opportunities to promote collaboration on research topics of direct relevance to the Convention. Policy research and analysis of the impact on NRM can further enhance the knowledge and understanding on key factors having an impact

on land degradation processes within different socio-economic settings, and promote extensive understanding of indigenous technologies as the basis for the generation and implementation of appropriate technologies that can be deployed effectively and efficiently through the NAPs.

38. The Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), hosted by FAO and supported by several donors under the leadership of IFAD, has also placed ecosystem and environmental management of natural resources high on its agenda. The GM will explore opportunities for collaboration with GFAR at its various levels, regional forums, subregional forums and the NARS systems, which involve different stakeholders (public sector, private sector, NGOs, IARCs, agricultural research institutes, farmers associations and donors).

39. IFAD and the World Bank among others have invested significant resources in the development of knowledge management systems that are end-user driven. Moreover, GFAR and the WAICENT of FAO have developed knowledge management systems and information on expert systems based on a very close interaction between databases and their various users (farmers, policy-makers, researchers, extension agents etc.). Through its cooperation with WAICENT and FAO the GM will seek to link into this system in the interest of providing Parties and stakeholders of the Convention with information related to research and technology.

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